

# 2015 Manifesto Sheffield

**BETTER  
POLITICS**

**TOGETHER**



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## Foreword

On the 7th of May you will decide the future of our country, you will be asked to make a choice about who represents you in Parliament. That choice is an important one and it is all yours. It's easy to feel powerless in the UK today. We will change that.

It's important for candidates to be clear about where they stand, especially where they have differences with their party. After all, it is important that your MP represents you, not their party and not their campaign donors when they vote in Parliament.

**"It is important that your MP represents you, not their party and not their campaign donors when they vote in Parliament."**

That is why I have published this manifesto, it makes it clear what I would support as a member of Parliament and is full of the ideas that I am passionate about and that I want to see on the agenda for 2015 and beyond. I have the right ideas on the health, the economy, education, personal freedoms, tax and more.

We need a government that listens. Our concerns about cuts to the services we need are ignored, our economy isn't serving everyone, and we are increasingly watched and restricted. I'm here to say it doesn't have to be like that.

I want a transparent and accountable government that works for all of us. One that delivers the services we need. We have to achieve that if we want better politics and a fairer society.

**I want a politics that is done with you not to you.**

I also know that my Party won't be forming the next government, but if we don't stand and challenge the major parties where they are wrong, then change is impossible regardless of who is sat in Downing Street. That's why I am standing in this election.

Politics is changing in the UK. But it will need all of us, politicians, activists, voters and citizens to be bolder to get the change we really need. If you like these ideas, then vote for them. It should be that simple. Don't let anyone scare you out of your democratic choice.



A handwritten signature of Andy Halsall in blue ink, written in a cursive style.

**Andy Halsall**  
Pirate Party Candidate  
Sheffield Central

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## My Principles

The policies that you will find in this manifesto are based upon seven simple principles that guide my and my Party's approach to all aspects of policy. Our principles are the basis of our political agenda and can be applied to any and all areas policy.

1. Our society is built upon the sharing of knowledge, ideas and culture. It is furthered by freedom of thought and expression, and protected by the rule of law. The Pirate Party exists to ensure the preservation and development of these foundations.
2. Human dignity is inviolable. Each of us has a right to life and to live, to freedom of thought and self determination, and to participate in society.
3. Everyone is equal under the law, we all have a say in the structure and processes of governance and the right to know what is done on our behalf.
4. Respect for our private and family life by government and society is fundamental and we all have freedom of choice in our associations and relationships.
5. To be free to participate in society everyone must have access to justice, education and such services and infrastructure required for life within it.
6. To ensure the security of our society it is the responsibility of the government to provide for its defence, the mechanisms of justice and such services and infrastructure required to meet its needs.
7. We will act on the basis of evidence, with the consent of society through democracy, in the interests of all.



# Health & Wellbeing

**I am committed to an NHS that delivers a comprehensive, universal, equitable, accessible service. It is vital that the NHS is publicly funded and publicly accountable.**

Since 2010 NHS funding per person has dropped in real terms. £800 million over the last government has been cut. This must be reversed if we want a health service that is fit for purpose. I want to increase NHS funding by 4% in real terms and bring UK healthcare spending in line with the G7 average. NHS funding must then continue to keep up with need, rising with in line with UK population growth. The NHS is a vital service, it is right that it be funded by general taxation.

**"I am committed to reversing privatisation, removing the NHS internal markets and preventing any future PFI deals."**

Privatisation, marketisation and private finance initiatives within the NHS have increased inefficiencies and costs. Since 1997, NHS infrastructure worth £11 billion has been built under PFIs at a cost of £80 billion, diverting money that should have been spent on patients to investor profits. These approaches create incentives to put profits over patients. I am committed to reversing privatisation, removing the NHS internal markets and preventing any future PFI deals.

I want the The Secretary of State for Health to be duty bound to ensure the provision of universal and comprehensive healthcare in England, along with the democratic accountability that brings.



I would support reinstating the NHS as the preferred provider of healthcare and remove the requirement to tender out contracts to the private sector. All of this would ensure that we halt and reverse privatisation in the least damaging manner possible.

I want to see a more accessible NHS, one where patients are not put off, or turned away due to charges. A key founding principle of the NHS was access on the basis of need, not ability to pay, on that basis I want to see NHS prescription fees scrapped.

NHS staff are a vital and precious resource and we have to make sure they are able to do their jobs. It's vital that doctors, nurses and other medical staff can focus on patient care; for this to happen they must have

the proper level of administrative and logistical support.

I want to see more openness in clinical trials. When the pharmaceutical industry does research, they have a conflict of interest in reporting results that may negatively affect their sales. I support publication of all data from all clinical trials and support the aims of the AllTrials campaign.

The NHS deals with the negative consequences of alcohol and drug abuse and as such should take the lead in both research and providing advice in all areas of drug policy, from the medicinal use of marijuana to the impact or dangers of new recreational drugs.



## Work & Welfare

The UK is still recovering from the crash of 2008 and employment and wages continue to be a problem. We have not managed to dig ourselves out of the hole caused by the bank crisis under Labour, and many of us are still suffering from the consequences.

I want an economy where people can find work and are properly paid for their work. I want to see jobs that are secure and stable and offer chances for development. I do believe that employees should have the ability to work flexibly, but that zero-hours contracts are not the right way to approach that. I would oppose any expansion of zero-hours work and look to find ways to reduce the number of people on zero-hours contracts wherever possible.

People in work should not suffer poverty, and work should pay. I support raising the minimum wage to match the Living Wage Foundation's recommendation for a living wage.

I recognise that many people who are starting or returning to employment are also being exploited. Internships are typically full-time jobs, yet interns often go unpaid. I would ensure that providers of internships are required to pay the National Minimum Wage.

Trade unions provide a way for workers' interests to be represented and defended. Trade union powers, including workers' right to strike to protest unfair work conditions, have been eroded under the coalition government. I would support giving workers and unions back more control and reducing restrictions on unions.



Work should not prevent people from starting a family; the UK government's Shared Parental Leave program starts in April this year, and makes leave fairer. However, it does not take into account some situations that may affect families - including families with three or more parents (e.g. via parental responsibility agreements). I would support extending this system to include all parents in a family.

Everyone should be able to rely on our welfare



system as a safety net in times of need, but the current system needs to be revitalised. A successful welfare system reaches everyone in need and helps people back on their feet. The current system is failing to do so, and being used as a stick to punish the most vulnerable. I want to see a welfare system that helps people and isn't used to cause harm.

I support removing the benefits cap. Quite simply, benefits should be sufficient to support claimants, either someone is eligible for benefit, or they are not. All criteria for eligibility should be considered independently of each other, no cap should be needed.

Those under 25 receive a lower level of Job Seekers Allowance, and people under 35 receive a lower level of Housing Benefit than older people. This isn't right and prevents young people from being independent. I want to see an end to age discrimination in the benefits system; everyone who is no longer in full-time education and who has not yet reached retirement age should receive equal benefits.

**"People in work  
should not suffer  
poverty, and work  
should pay. "**

The "Bedroom Tax" puts extraordinary pressure on a people to give up established homes at a time when they are at their most vulnerable; it has caused disruption to both landlords and tenants alike. I want to see the "Bedroom Tax" scrapped.

We must protect Sure Start services and restore services where they have been cut. It is vitally important that all children get the best possible start in life. The rationale under which Sure Start Children's Centres were set up should be extended, not rolled back. They have made life easier for millions of families and could improve lives further. Sure Start should be about actively bringing down the levels of child poverty in the UK.

The current mechanism used to determine eligibility for the Employment and Support Allowance is failing many people in dire need of support. I would call for an immediate review of the assessment methods used and look for alternative and fairer ways to administrate assessments.



## Economy

We need an economy that works for everyone.

In the last 5 years the UK has seen cuts to services, a fall in wages and a cynical attack on the support the state offers those in need. We have seen publicly owned companies, including Royal Mail, the Fire Service College, and Remploy sold off for little gain to the taxpayer, but great returns for investors. UK debt is higher than it was in 2010. The deficit is higher than at any time until we bailed out the banks and unemployment is still at 5.7%.

We can do better.

Austerity is not going to repair the UK economy. We face a number of challenges, from a lack of social housing to poor transport and communications links that can be dealt with by investing in infrastructure projects and housing. That investment would be good for the UK economy generally and is an approach I support over continued cuts.

Infrastructure projects provide long-term benefit to the UK, stimulating current and future growth. Improving public transport (particularly outside London), building better communications infrastructure and making Britain a world leader in renewable energy will allow us to reduce unemployment and provide skills to people who have lost jobs in other parts of the economy.



The 'too big to fail' culture that contributed to the economic crisis is still alive and well in the UK. I want to stop the UK taxpayer from propping-up incompetent or overstretched banks. There should be no more bank bailouts, and mechanisms must be put in place to deal with failures. To reduce reckless or questionable behaviour, directors of large public companies should have a personal liability for their actions and decisions.

Taxation should be fair to the taxpayer. Those earning least should pay a smaller amount of income tax, and should always have a lower marginal tax rate. That marginal tax rate should apply to all taxes on income, whether from employment, investments or other instruments. The so-called "Mayfair tax loophole" must be closed.

I want to see more action taken to reduce tax avoidance and act on tax evasion. A dedicated tax minister with clear responsibilities to us all would ensure all businesses and individuals are

contributing, and that no group faces an excessive burden. Companies whose structures shift their tax burden abroad or into tax havens would be excluded from winning public sector contracts.

**"I want to see more action taken to reduce tax avoidance and act on tax evasion. "**

Many industries that are essential to the United Kingdom (including water, electricity generation and supply, gas supply and other utilities) have been privatised in recent decades, but continue to rely on massive government subsidy for infrastructure investment. These private organisations then take millions in support, whilst channelling profits to shareholders and directors. I believe that when taxpayers subsidise services, the taxpayer should see a return on their money before private investors are paid dividends.

I oppose the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and will do whatever I can to prevent the UK being a party to the agreement.

## Education

**We need an education system which delivers a great education to everyone and makes it possible for people of any age to reach their full potential. It means investing in early years, primary and secondary education and removing barriers to higher education by scrapping tuition fees.**

The framework for early years education must be updated to ensure it meets the needs of children before they get to school. We also need to ensure that early years teachers have time to teach, by reducing the administrative burden where possible.

Parents in some areas are facing a shortage of school places, particularly in primary schools, where they are seeing increased class sizes or small schools with too many pupils enrolled.

**"Tuition fees are unfair, don't do what they were intended to, and must be scrapped"**

I want to give local authorities back the legal powers they need to plan and provide enough school places in their local areas. The Government must ensure that the funding is available to deliver school places where needed. Local authorities should be at the centre of and responsible for the local democratic control of education.

The introduction of free schools and the creation of academies (and imposition of academy status) has resulted in the fragmentation of the education system. Academies and free schools have too many flawed elements relating to free market principles that simply do not deliver effective results within the sector. More to the point, they are diverting funding from education toward administration and creating lucrative, but draining opportunities for private companies rather than delivering good education to children.

I want to end approvals for free schools and give all schools the right change status at the behest of the communities they serve.

I want to make schools accountable to local councils, parents and communities. All our schools need to respect and meet the needs of our diverse communities and there must be diversity within the education system (including options about approaches) but within a sensible framework.

It is also important that we stop the forced academies programme immediately and return oversight of all state funded schools to local authorities – whilst maintaining autonomy on curriculum and assessments.

Local councils should have an individual responsible for Education within their area with a mandate to ensure consistency and equality and a good local school for every child.

We need consistency within our education system, but with the flexibility required to deliver excellence. I want to see all schools follow a curriculum that states what the minimum educational requirements are in terms of skills and knowledge, but not how they should be taught.

Schools should have the freedom to spend their budgets as they see fit and should be encouraged to invest in knowledgeable, enthusiastic and well qualified teachers.

Currently Academies and free schools in England are allowed to employ unqualified staff to teach. In free schools, people teaching without qualified teacher status represent 13% full-time teachers.



I think this is the wrong approach, everyone in a teaching role to be qualified teachers or on a training route towards qualification and that continuous development of teachers is funded and promoted

We need to make sure that there are routes to teaching qualifications open to people from other professions and backgrounds to ensure that the pool of teachers is diverse and with a broad and deep skills pool. After all, we need great teachers.



Overburdening teachers, paying them poorly and adding an excessive bureaucratic burden to their workload does none of that.

I want to see action taken to reduce teachers non-teaching workload by cutting unneeded bureaucracy. I want to restore a national minimum pay structure for schools, taking into account regional disparities and ensuring that professional pay levels are paid to all teachers.

We also need to ensure that teacher pensions are funded at the appropriate level and provide a good income on retirement.



# Innovation

Our economy depends upon innovation. We need to make sure we have the right policies in place to support innovators in all sections of the economy.

The UK has a very strong technology development and scientific research sector, however research funding is at a 20-year low of 0.5% of GDP. I would aim to increase funding of research to at least 0.8% of GDP, matching the G8 average.

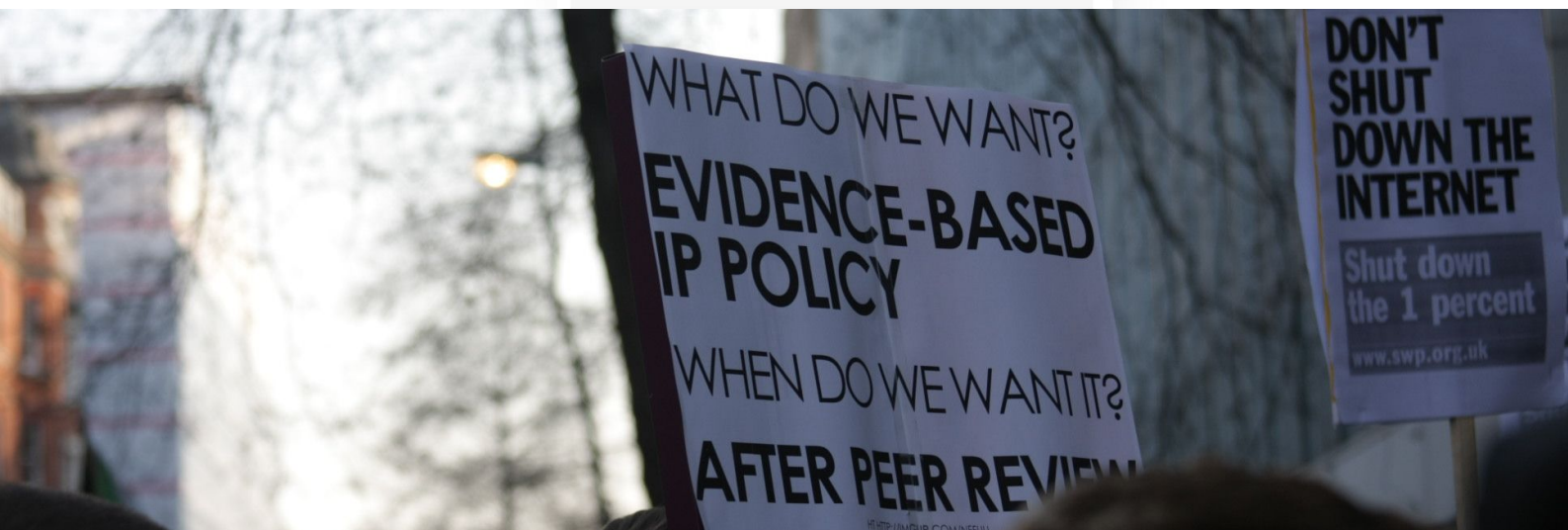
**“I support open access to outputs of publicly funded scientific research “**

The results of our research investment must be open to all. For that reason I support open access to outputs of publicly funded scientific research. We need Research Councils UK (RCUK) to continue its commitment to full open access, provide grants to scholar-led open access journals and data archives.

It is also important that we can build on the work of others, patents exist to reward the inventors of truly outstanding ideas. I want to see reform of the patent system to ensure it does just that, and prevent patents from being used to stifle competition.

I want to see competition and innovation encouraged, we can do that by introducing a system of compulsory patent licensing, and by providing exemptions to patent law for non-commercial use, personal study and academic research.

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## Society

**I want to live in a free and fair society where everyone can take part, with space to live, respect for all of our communities, and where basic human rights are the respected.**

I would oppose any attempt to repeal the Human Rights Act 1998 and believe the UK should remain a party to the European Convention on Human Rights.

**“We need to aim to build 250,000 every year to prevent spiralling house prices and a shortage of affordable homes”**

Everyone should have access to affordable housing, and housing policies and house prices shouldn't result in the displacement of people simply because of cost. I want to see affordable homes for all.

To deliver more housing I would support enabling councils to build affordable council housing. Income from any future council housing sales should be put towards new building and councils would be permitted to borrow to fund housing construction.



I want to see the UK address the current shortage of housing, we need to aim to build 250,000 every year to prevent spiralling house prices and a shortage of affordable homes. If private builders are unable to meet that target, the government should directly build housing to make up the shortfall.

We have an obligation to provide sanctuary to those individuals who have been forced to flee their homes. I want to ensure that those people who come to the UK seeking asylum are treated fairly and are given decisions quickly about their status, whether they are granted asylum or not. Prolonging either repatriation to their country of origin or resettlement in the UK is simply wrong.

Once an asylum seeker has been granted asylum they should be given assistance, including access to employment and education.



# Environment

We need smart policy to improve our environment. The environmental challenges, from dealing with fly tipping and littering to climate change, are monumental. We have a responsibility to look after our environment and wildlife. This requires changes in all parts of our economy and in our behaviour, but if we work together we can deal with both.



Litter is more than a blight on our landscape; it is an indication of wasted resources. We can work together to improve the areas where we live and at the same time deal with a threat to our world. Using new technologies for power generation and to fuel our cars will help a great deal too; I want to see investment in British engineering to bring about the changes and technology that we need.

There are simple solutions too, I support bringing in a bottle return scheme (paying for a deposit on bottles and cans which is given back when they are returned). This would reduce litter and the burden on recycling facilities, as well as changing attitudes towards our precious resources. Making polluters pay for the damage they do to our environment, whether they are big businesses or irresponsible landowners is the right thing to do.

**"Open spaces must be protected, land ownership must be transparent, our common heritage maintained and developers made to act responsibly."**

Open spaces must be protected, land ownership must be transparent, our common heritage maintained and developers made to act responsibly. It is time for a fair environment policy. There should be a new focus on littered and polluted "problem" areas, and a more proactive Environment Agency.

## Energy

Power generation is a major issue facing the UK. The next government will have to put together an effective and environmentally sound policy to ensure we have the required generation capacity. I believe that the focus should be on renewable energy as well as investigating and developing new technologies, including nuclear, and continuing to improve the effectiveness of existing ones.

Removing public subsidies to fossil fuel and hydrocarbon production and focusing support on renewable production would help to continue the UK's switch to cleaner, sustainable energy. We shouldn't just focus on large generators though, continuing the feed-in tariff would ensure that small scale renewable power generation remains attractive.

**"I will oppose fracking until environmental and social concerns are addressed."**

Fracking (unconventional gas extraction) poses a threat to our environment that simply isn't justifiable on either economic or environmental grounds. I will oppose fracking until environmental and social concerns are addressed.

If we want to be at the forefront of innovation in renewable energy and get the most out of our resources and environment, we need to set and meet ambitious goals. I know the UK can exceed the target of 80% reductions in emissions between 1990 and 2050 and that we can switch more of our energy generation capacity to renewables.





# Justice

A justice system that isn't available to everyone is not a justice system at all. The current trend towards setting up barriers to access is worrying and I want to see it stopped. Cuts to legal aid must be reversed, to preserve access for the most vulnerable in our society.

We deserve an impartial justice system, accountable police officers and a fair system for dealing with those convicted of offences.

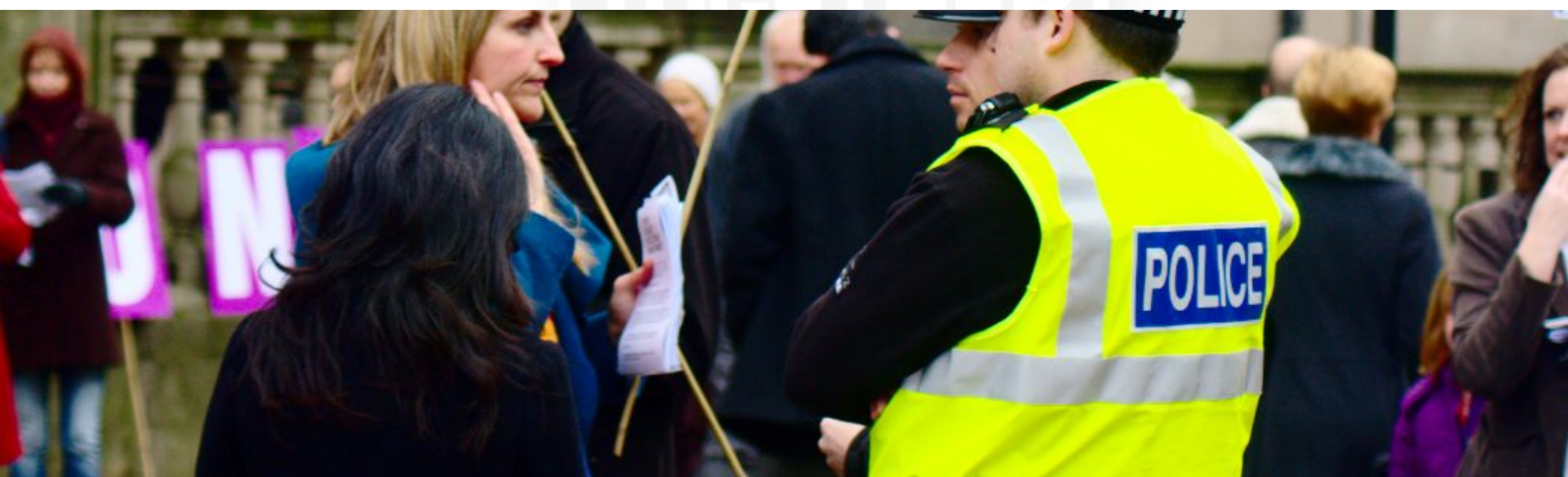
**"A justice system that isn't available to everyone is not a justice system at all."**

Public consent is the cornerstone of such a justice system. Much is made of community policing, but priorities need to be set with the whole community, not just a few people. Consultation and involvement needs to be more inclusive, seeking out groups who are under-represented. Agreed priorities should be updated regularly and set out clearly. CCTV is becoming ever more intrusive and expensive, but it is far from effective. Money wasted on cameras should be used to reverse police cuts.

There should not be any political interference in the everyday working of the police and the expensive Tory imposed police commissioners should be abolished.

The CPS and Director of Public Prosecution's duty to consider public interest in prosecutions should be strengthened. We must see an end to costly and unnecessary cases like the Twitter Joke Trial. An action plan should be prepared on how to reduce deaths in custody and through contacts with the police.

Unjust extradition arrangements must also be reworked to protect our citizens from disproportionate and inappropriate requests from foreign governments. In particular the current UK-US treaty is weighted against British citizens, and is due for change to protect us all.



## Mass Surveillance & Whistleblowing

Today we face an unprecedented level of surveillance, with too many groups authorised to snoop and too little oversight. I don't accept that the bulk collection of our communications isn't mass surveillance just because some of it may not be being read.

**"Without whistleblowers we would be less free. We wouldn't know about many of the problems that exist in our society. "**

surveillance 'fishing expeditions'.

We need to decide what powers are needed and how to oversee their use properly.

We can stop mass surveillance and make sure that the police and intelligence services have the funds and capabilities to carry out targeted surveillance with proper authorisation and oversight. We must replace warrantless mass surveillance with targeted collection. No more



We can protect whistleblowers from retaliation and give them a safe route to blow the whistle. That will help us rebuild trust in governments.

Without whistleblowers we would be less free. We wouldn't know about many of the problems that exist in our society. The mistakes our government has made would remain hidden. We couldn't take action.

Whistleblowers like Edward Snowden, Catherine Gunn and many more have exposed government overreach and abuse and suffered for it.

Yet their revelations have shown us the scale of tax evasion, the impact of privatisation in the NHS and the impact of union blacklisting.

We have to support whistleblowers when they risk everything to expose secrets that cause so much harm. After all, a well-informed citizenry is necessary to the liberty of a free state.

The Parliamentary Intelligence and Security Committee must be truly independent and robust, it must act for UK citizens not protect vested interests. It must also be listened too. The ISC has called for better oversight and regulation of the intelligence services, I support a serious effort in ensuring that that oversight and properly balances our rights with our security needs.

I will strengthen data protection laws; companies must inform data subjects of their rights and be clear about their data policies. I'd also aim to make it easier to apply to a court for compensation where data protection laws have been breached, and increase the penalties for any breaches of data protection laws.

There must be clearer guidelines and restrictions on the use of DNA records by authorities. This will ensure samples are only taken voluntarily or when there are reasonable grounds to suspect the individual of having committed a serious offence. Samples should be promptly destroyed if the individual is acquitted or not charged with a criminal offence, and they should only be held for the length of time for which there is a reasonable suspicion that the suspect has committed a crime.



## Restoring Trust in Democracy

Our democracy is in real danger. All too few people take part and vote, not enough people are able or willing to get involved. It's time to reverse that trend, and it starts with restoring trust in government and the political system.

The independence referendum in Scotland showed that when people believe they can make a difference they get involved with the process. We need to replicate that across the UK.

We can start by trusting people.

Given that self determination is one of the Party's fundamental principles, I believe that a referendum on the UK's membership of the EU should be offered to voters in the UK. I trust you to make the right decision.

I want to open up our democracy to younger people. They see their lives and futures directed by governments they have no say over. I trust young people and want to allow them to vote from the age of 16.

The government also needs to be more open and accountable.

The quality of legislation must be improved, and we have to aim to avoid laws that don't do what they were claimed to do. I would investigate the possibility of permanent elected legislative committees for each government department in the Commons rather than ad hoc public bill committees.

How the government spends money and who it employs to work for us must be open to scrutiny. The detail of the government's deals and agreements with suppliers and other businesses should be disclosed.

The delivery of services to government is littered with stories of companies exceeding budgets, delivering late and renegotiating contracts to improve profits. This seriously undermines public confidence in a government's ability to negotiate sensible contracts.

I want to see penalties for significant performance failures for government suppliers implemented. Where a company fails to deliver a government project within 125% of budget or 125% of the deadline then that company (both its parent organisations and subsidiaries) should be banned from providing services or products to the government for at least 2 years.

Beyond government, we need to improve our democracy. I see proportional representation as vital to ensuring that governments properly represent everyone, and that everyone's voice matters in elections. I want to restart the national debate and push for a system of proportional representation to be implemented for all elections in the UK.



# Transport

Part of looking after our environment and having a dynamic economy is having a well-functioning and integrated public transport system, and a respect for active modes of transport.

**"I would support renationalising the railways, gradually, as franchise contracts expire."**

There must be no more private profit at public expense on our railways. When assessing rail performance, overcrowding and affordability should be taken into proper consideration. Ticket pricing needs to be transparent, easy to understand, and work between different forms of transport. We can get Britain moving.

Rail privatisation has made a mess of rail provision in the UK. Ticket prices are on the rise, and seats are in short supply. Rail is more highly subsidised now that it was prior to privatisation - since 1985, rail subsidies have increased five-fold in real terms. Profits are increasingly funnelled out of the country via contracts with international providers.



I would support renationalising the railways, gradually, as franchise contracts expire.

The UK is far too reliant on fossil fuels, and a big part of this is our reliance on motor vehicles. If we can reduce our use of motor vehicles, it will be beneficial to all, we need to promote active transport, like walking and cycling.

The biggest barrier to cycling in the UK is the poor state of the infrastructure. This is a result of a lack of funding, resulting in dangerous compromises and conflicts with other road users, and a lack of a coherent, standardised approach nationally.

Investing £20 per person per year in cycling infrastructure over the next 5 years would start to address the deficiencies in funding.

A national framework for cycling infrastructure would put an end to the haphazard, compromise-ridden infrastructure that we see every day.

The overall success of this effort would be evaluated after five years, and the budget adjusted accordingly.

## Foreign Policy

Co-operation is vital at the international level to promote our values and principles and to ensure that the UK is a force for good on the world stage. Many of the problems we face are global in nature or extent and their solutions will require a united global approach.

The UK has a duty to support and provide help to countries that need it. UK aid and development spending is important in helping countries recover from disasters and in helping countries support themselves and develop. We should aim to ensure that our aid programmes serve the needs of the people they are intended to help and are not used as part of an agenda of political, economic or military self interest.

Aid should remain above 0.7% of Gross National Product with a target of 1% percent of GNP within ten years. Our aid efforts should be prioritised on the basis of objective, open and accountable criteria, independent of other political or economic interests.

I support the tasking of British Military units to operations intended to increase search and rescue capabilities and reduce migrant deaths in the Mediterranean, as well as measures to target both traffickers and the vessels they intend to use.



The Israeli–Palestinian conflict continues to pose challenges and divide people and countries after many decades of conflict and unrest. It is not the only serious issue we face on the world stage, but resolving it is vital.

We must work for peace and stability in Syria, Iraq and Lebanon. The UK has expended billions of pounds and many lives in conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa over the last decade, we should now work to ensure that the legacy of those interventions is positive for those living in the region. That may involve an international effort to develop and execute a comprehensive strategy to defeat Islamic State.

Internationally there is much work to be done to repair, and re-establish relationships amongst countries on the international stage. There is much turmoil, anger and suspicion between states that should be working together.

For that reason it is only right that we encourage the UK to recognise Palestine. It is clear that Palestinians have decided that they want to be in control of their destiny and have their own state.

They should be supported in that endeavour, not ignored. We would support the recognition of Palestine and recognise that such recognition would mean that Palestinians would enjoy the benefits of independence and be held to the same standards and have the same duties as other states in the family of nations.

## Culture

**Culture is a vital part of our country - it shouldn't be a luxury. I want everyone to be able to take part in and share culture.**

Artists should be the focus of culture sector funding, this is where the research and development of the creative industries happens. Success in increasing and protecting money going to artists, rather than administration or overheads, must be one of the key performance indicators of National Portfolio Organisations.

I will support measures that help libraries, museums and other organisations that hold collections to digitise

their content and make it available online, in open formats, wherever possible. This will both preserve access to culturally important artefacts and increase accessibility.

**"It's time to bring laws about how we consume film, music, TV and books into the 21st century."**

Paper books are free from VAT yet e-books are not. A book should be defined by what it provides, not the material that is used to produce it, and

any tax on books is a tax on reading. Like paper books, e-books should be zero-rated for VAT as soon as possible.

A fair and balanced copyright regime that is suitable for the 21st century is an absolute necessity for the UK to remain competitive in a global economy that is built upon ideas and innovation. Copyright should give artists and innovators the chance to make money from their work; however, that needs to be balanced with the rights of society as a whole. We need to stop web blocking generally, and penalise geo-blocking and instead promote open digital markets. I will work for copyright reform and reduce copyright terms to balance everyone's needs.



# Defence

**Defence of the realm is a primary responsibility of government. The United Kingdom must be able to meet its own defence needs as well as its obligations to defend overseas territories and allies.**

Whilst I am not in favour of so called 'pre-emptive defence' or an aggressive defence posture, I know that the UK must be ready to respond to aggression or threats to our way of life. I firmly believe that our Armed Forces must be well equipped with the appropriate equipment for the tasks we ask them to undertake, and trained for the roles in which they find themselves.

**"All members of the Armed Forces should be secure in the knowledge that the country will not desert them once they complete their terms of service."**

The British Armed Forces are rightly regarded as the best in the world, and we must ensure that we take care of them to the best of our ability and employ them in combat operations only when absolutely necessary. All members of the Armed Forces should be secure in the knowledge that the country will not desert them once they complete their terms of service.

The UK's military spending should be focused on our conventional forces, especially on forces that can be rapidly deployed. Airborne forces, Infantry and other front line units bear the brunt of operations in the 21st century and should be prioritised.



The UK's ability to meet its defence commitments to allies and dependent territories like the Falklands is undermined by a lack of operational Aircraft Carriers. The Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers currently under construction should be brought into operational service, including their aircraft, as soon as possible.

The United Kingdom must ensure that its defence logistical capabilities are sufficient to meet the obligations that we have or may be required to undertake. Ensuring that the UK has sufficient independent air and sea-lift capacity is vital. It is important that if necessary we are able to operate independently of our allies.

I would aim to refocus defence procurement on the UK or Joint UK allied projects. It is vitally important that costs are kept down and that delivery of weapons systems, vehicles, communications systems and



other military procurement is both timely and that the delivered product is appropriate to the defined need. I want to ensure that our troops have what they need when they need it.

I take a different view from my party when it comes to nuclear weapons: While other countries have nuclear weapons we must maintain an independent deterrent and encourage nuclear disarmament globally.

However, any like for like replacement of Trident should be abandoned and instead a reduced number of our current weapon stocks should have their operational lifespans extended. Further reductions should take place as other countries reduce the number of deliverable weapons they possess.

Whilst I know it is unrealistic to expect that the world will abolish nuclear weapons overnight, it is more likely to do so over a longer time scale. To encourage this, and to prevent conventional wars from becoming nuclear wars, the UK should seek to negotiate terms that will strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

I want to see a negotiated global cap on the number of nuclear weapons any treaty nuclear-weapon state may possess, which will automatically reduce every year according to a set schedule. I would aim for provisions to make it attractive for states to not possess nuclear weapons and unattractive for them to possess them, as well as offer confidence-building measures for states that feel threatened by nuclear armed neighbours.

We must also strengthen verification measures and inspection routines and ensure they apply equally to all states that possess nuclear weapons.



## The European Union

Given that self determination is one of the fundamental principles that my party and I believe in, we believe that a referendum on the UK's membership of the EU should be offered to voters in the UK, and that such a referendum should include the option for the UK to pull out of the EU and negotiate it's own agreements with the EU as a whole or with individual member states.

The EU should live up to its own principles on subsidiarity and decisions should not be taken at an EU level if they can be better resolved on a national, regional or local level.

### **"A referendum on the UK's membership of the EU should be offered to voters in the UK"**

It is important that the EU increase it's level of transparency and openness and that these principles should inform the EU's politics, organisation and administration. In the absence of transparency and openness, accountability becomes questionable at best. Lack of accountability is my primary concern with the EU.

To ensure that the European Union is accountable to its members and citizens, it is vital that there is scrutiny of the European Council by national parliaments.

The UK should not adopt the Euro as currency nor aim for it's adoption. No EU member state should be required to join the Euro, or agree to join in future as a requirement of membership. The weaknesses of monetary union in the context of the EU have been made more than clear and without being resolved, it is obvious that some countries, their economies and citizens, would not benefit from closer monetary union.

I want to see a rebalancing of power within the EU toward elected representatives and away from the Council of Ministers and Commission.

## Future Challenges

The policies in this document represent what our candidates will support, they indicate a direction of travel that our members have said they back. They deal with problems that we have now and offer solutions that could be implemented now.

But that isn't enough.

I know we will face huge new challenges in the future, some of them will come out of the successes that we will achieve, especially if the policies in this document are implemented.

The biggest of these challenges within the UK is what the economy will look like when technology is able to do more, when it allows fewer people to do vastly more work, across all fields. Self service tills have replaced staff in supermarkets, robots have replaced engineers in factories and computers have replaced whole teams of analysts in offices.

The range of work that can be automated is only going to increase, it will have an impact on doctors, lawyers, retail staff, soldiers, builders, mechanics and many more. I can't ignore the potential implications and we need to think about solutions now.

One possible solution to an economy that can produce more and more goods and services without creating jobs would be to provide a Universal Basic Income (UBI) for UK citizens.

It would ensure that all British citizens had a basic income allowing them to live, learn, innovate and take chances with new endeavours.

A citizens' income would also replace most benefits which would reduce costs and complexity. It would help ensure that nobody falls into a poverty or unemployment trap. Importantly, the incentive to work would remain, as getting a job would not remove the UBI, but would raise the amount of money coming in to the household.

It would also create flexibility for single parent families, carers, disabled people and people wanting to dedicate their time to community or volunteering programmes, as part-time jobs would become a viable means of bringing in an income.

There are significant hurdles to the implementation of such a system, including the need for comprehensive research into the social and economic impact it would have and whether it can be affordable. I think it is likely that such a programme is possible but would have to be reached incrementally. As such, my party is proposing running a trial of basic income in a small area of the UK to establish how such a system could be implemented.

# Pledges & Promises

Throughout the course of this election campaign, candidates have been contacted by lobbyists, charities, interest groups and companies in the hope of soliciting specific pledges.

Whilst I agree with many of the issues and positions presented, and have corresponded with many organisations, I have only felt able to sign three pledges. I signed the '[Frac Free Promise](#)' promoted by Friends of the Earth, support the '[Nursing Counts Manifesto](#)' from the Royal College of Nursing and agreed to the three principles of the '[Trans-Manifesto](#)' as presented by the LGBT Consortium.

If you live in Sheffield, you should also have received at least one leaflet from me outlining my priorities in this election (or select the images below).





## About this Document

This document is the Pirate Party Sheffield Election Manifesto approved by Andy Halsall, Pirate Party UK's candidate for Sheffield Central in the 2015 General Election. The positions and policies outlined in this document differ from central party policy, and expand upon positions outlined in the national manifesto for this election.

Any questions should be referred to the Pirate Party in Sheffield.



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